April 1839

Annual Report on Tracts

In all the committee reports upon this subject the transactions of the American Tract society must occupy an important place. Not that it is in advance of all kindred societies but that, for obvious reasons, it is of the most general interest to us. "With a board composed of members of eleven different denominations, & a publishing committee from three, & having for its object the diffusion of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel there is no room for any to fear that it is a 'Sectarian thing'". All who desire the spread of the gospel may here unite to send its glad tidings to the remotest parts of the earth.

Within the limits of this report more cannot be done than to invite the friends of the cause to the principle fountains, & thence to point them, here & there to a stream whose fertalizing banks are calculated to gladden & encourage the Christians heart. This society was originally organized at Boston & the branch where the seat of opperations is still there, presented its 24th annual report in May last. The society at N York its thirteenth.

To this last our attention will be mainly confined. Our latest statistics come down to near the first of march last. To obtain a correct view of the present condition & wants of the society it is necessary to look for a moment at what it has been in years that are past—

The difficulties with which the society had formerly to contend gradually gave way & its receipts were almost constantly increasing till the anniversary of '36 when it reported the sum of $130,991, of which 35,000 thousand was for the foreign field.
But this sum came so far short of meeting the great & increasing demand for tracts, that the committee impressed with the thought that pagan millions must not their course to death amidst the embarrassments of business, appointed a special committee, on Jan. of the last year to consider what were then the claims of Providence on the society in behalf of pagan & foreign lands.
They reported a resolution to appropriate $40,000 to these fields as soon as the means could be obtained.
Total receipts of the society for the last year $91,732 nearly $40,000 short of the receipts of the previous year. Of this for the foreign field $11,945. Less by $24,000 than the previous year. Contributed for vol. circulation $9,382
Total donations $37,173. The remaining $54,000 was for publications sold.
Printed during the year 2,431,500 publications of which 110,000 were volumes. Circulated 3,772,617 copies including 196,431 vols. Total circulation since the formation of the society 46,940,425

copies, including 4554,222 volumes. New publications stereotyped during the year 46. New auxiliaries recognized 26. In all 1184 auxiliaries. The society has aided 136 A.F. Missionaries & assistants, ~~& Lic~~ who have 23 printing establishments 454 presses. There have issued, in 74 different languages, a greater number of pages than the society at home. In addition to the above the society has aided friends in Russia, who printed in '37 6,900,000 pages. In Stockholm, in Poland. The Hungarian society a Berlin where were printed the last year 136,000 tracts. In Hamburg who published in '36 293,000 tracts. In Bremen, & ~~Barmen~~, Geneva. The last has published in all 23,754,000 pages. It has also aided the Society at Basle at Brussels & at at Paris.

Who can look at the demands made upon the society from foreign lands & say that the $40,000 contained in the resolution was too much. Yet $30,000 of it remained to be raised the present year, which ends the 15th of this month. Of that sum $11,000 dollars remained to be raised during the last quarter of the year.

A single circumstance has, for a time prevented the disasterous consequences which must otherwise have early been felt. While in previous years the society has endeavored to meet the wants of

the missionary, ~~but~~ it has also endeavored to encourage him in his work by a small supply in advance as an earnest that the churches at home were able & willing to give him all he and he might want. But within a few days letters have been received from France, from Russia, from Greece, from Northern India from Madras & from China urging the society to hasten their aid as the tract fund is entirely exhausted.

2. Tract Society of New York city.

Receipts for the year ending Dec, 1834 $10.229

Ward missionaries 16. visitors 1141. Tracts distributed 747,324. As much as the society has done with tracts that is but one way in which its benevolence flows forth to the destitute & the degraded. It has done incalculable good by giving bibles & testaments, by gathering children into sabbath & other schools & the more advanced into bible classes, by inducing them to attend church & give their names to the temperance pledge, by reclaiming the wanderer & by bringing sinners to a knowledge of the truth.

Hopeful converts for the year 310

Yet the field is but partially occupied

In the sentiment of one of the most efficient men probably thousands in that city have not yet been reached by a single tract. And the great light that does exist there presents, in mournful contrast the sad state of those whom a religious book or even a tract has not yet reached, to warn them of their danger or to point them to heaven.

Philadelphia Tract Society.

Receipts the last year $45,045 circulated 4,150,740 pages: 4 missionaries. 500 visitors 30,000 families visited, 420 supplied with the bible. 1816 children engaged for schools, numerous prayer-meetings held, 100 hopeful conversion.

Volum Destribution

Much has been done, in this department during the year, & many are the tokens of Divine approbation that have attended there labors.- 200,000 vols have been circulated mostly on sale. Contributions for furnishing a stock of volumes in the depository $9,000. Since the date of the last report the volum enterprise has been prosecuted not less vigerously than before. But this is rather to complete previous plans than to enter upon new ones. It could not extend

its opperations at once. Its funds and supply of volumns on hand are less than the past year —

London Tract Society

This is the oldest society, of the kind, of which we have any knowledge. Its 34th annual report was presented in May last. Total receipts for the year 62,054 £. Realized for sales 49,244 £. Have grants of 4,144 £ while its whole benevolent income was only 5,122 £. Less than the previous year 7,000 £. This decrease is ~~thought to be~~ owing to distress in the manufacturing interests. Of tracts it made grants for home distribution 2,076,164, Of libraries for missionaries sunday schools, work-houses, for ships the Army & Navy 513. New publications 143 Total amount circulated 16,000.000 & including the publications of foreign societies aided by this 272,000,000, of publications in about 40 different languages.

In correspondence with this is the religious Tract & book Society for Ireland. This circulated the last year 435,277 books and tracts. Total circulation of this society 4,500,000 copies. —

A single individual of the London society once a soldier of the British army, circulated in one year 150,000 tract, often carrying them to haunts of vice, whose inmates were more eager for ~~our~~ plunder than the word of life.

Society at Paris Receipts for the past year $4,500
Copies published 600,000. New tracts in French 12, in
Spanish 6. In all their series, 125 French, 10 Spanish & 11 German tracts. A number of these the pope has enrolled in his Index Expurgatorius.
In connection with this society may be named the Religious Book Society of Toulouse whose first report was presented in March 1837
It had then issued 57,000 copies of books & tracts among which were many of the American Societies choicest volumes. Receipts 4.2 dollars
There is much that gives a peculiar interest to tract operations in France
They are acting in the country recently deluged in blood by the enemies of the truth
They are acting for the salvation of the very people for whom the infidels of France prior to the revolution actually expended 4,000,000 of dollars" in a single year in purchasing, printing & dispersing books to corrupt the minds of the people & to prepare them for their measures of destruction
With the work of infidel France to unite with the zeal of the infidel, in his work of death to show them what resolution can accomplish may we not hope that these societies are the beginnings of those

that will hereafter outstrip the zeal of the adherent & give more than their four million a year to bring back France & the world to the Prince of peace.

The agency of Colporters so generally employed by these societies, instead of being a novel thing as was supposed, is found to have been extensively & successfully employed in the early history of the Reformation.

Lower Saxony Tract Society at Hamburg. This society has presented its 16th report. Receipts for the year [illegible] 44,500 copies published 600,000. New tracts in French. 12 In Spanish 6. Whole series 125 French, 10 Spanish & 11 German Tracts. [illegible] 2,449. Tracts in German 4. Whole series in that language 133 & 2 in Lettonian Tracts printed 293,400. Circulated 230,747 Total printed by the Society 2,703,509. The society is, comparatively a weak & feeble band. There are around them sad scenes of darkness to be enlightened fearful haunts of dissipation to be demolished & hosts of infidelity to be met & vanquished by the power of truth.

It is pleasing to learn that the tract cause abroad is assuming a systematic form. In many places it is conducted with nearly as much system as in our own country. Among these is Jaffna, Ceylon. It has been divided into districts each of which is visited weekly. At Madras also are regular distributers pervading every street and as far as possible every house of its 400,000 heathen inhabitants. Rangoon had been regularly visited more than 2 years since, & it was designed to go with tract after tract till the entire population should be supplied with all the publications of the mission.

In conclusion, we are obliged to view the past year as one of difficulty & trial to the tract cause. But the smiles of heaven that have rested upon it in all parts of the world are numerous, & with these before the churches we cannot avoid the belief that they will meet the demands of the heathen for tracts— that they will fill this channel of benevolence— that the Tr. society outriding the storm, will hereafter shine forth among the instruments of the

works conversion, pure & unsullied
as the cloudless star of evening, af-
ter the tempest has passed away.